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strikingly exemplified in the case of a recent pamphlet containing 'a few facts about carpets;' but the result is the more interesting, since in this one example the analogies of the various stages of percolation are clearly seen. The writer starts with his pure *spiritus vini Gallici*, good in itself, but capable of being considerably changed by the maceration of improper substances. This alcohol is the fact, capable of scientific demonstration, that moths destroy carpets. Thus he runs on: "MOTHS. — Many are not aware that all the present damage is done when the millers commence to fly, as their very presence indicates the absence of the worm. It is to prevent the miller's incubating, that precautions should be taken." The alcohol with the next step begins to be discolored in the following manner, though to a slight extent: "A large proportion of the millers never hatch eggs, but die without causing any harm." We will let it soak awhile, and then this result is found: "The male miller, which does not fly, but runs very rapidly, is easily detected by his triangular-shaped figure; but, keeping himself out of sight, he is not so easily found."

Dropping our simile for the moment, we wish to call attention to a peculiar and reprehensible bit of wickedness of the 'males' in hiding from their lawful 'better halves;' for, so our author says, "his hiding explains the devious flights of the female in his search." Give ear now, good housewife, and recollect, that, besides protecting your carpets, you are avenging a great slight upon your sex — a slight which brings about a perpetual leap-year — by following out to its fullest extent the suggestion embraced in the following sentence, which, to return to our simile, renders our percolate still darker: "The killing of one male is equal to the extinction of many ordinary millers." Our alcohol is now almost saturated. Let us draw the stopper from the percolator, and allow the fluid to run out. It appears as follows: "The male miller is commonly known by the name of 'silver-fish.'" The process is complete; we have obtained

our percolate; by degeneration our moth has evolved a thysanure. Our alcohol is spoiled: what shall we do with it?

A NEWSPAPER RUMOR from Washington, printed in the *Boston Advertiser* last Monday, to the effect, that, in consequence of a charge of extravagance in the conduct of the U. S. geological survey, Professor Shaler of Cambridge was 'talked of to succeed Major Powell,' brought out an immediate rejoinder from the former on the following day, defending the survey from a charge so injurious and so untrue. "It is my firm belief," says Mr. Shaler, "that no one of the scientific departments of the government has been so well and economically managed as the geological survey since it came under the able direction of Major Powell." The same conclusion will be reached by any one who gives the subject any proper attention, or who is acquainted with the character and methods of the able chief of this survey. A change made on such a charge, without honest and open investigation, would be iniquitous: after such investigation, there could be no doubt of the result.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

**.* Correspondents are requested to be as brief as possible. The writer's name is in all cases required as proof of good faith.*

Solar eclipse of March 16.

THE solar eclipse was very successfully observed here to-day, under good atmospheric conditions. Cumulus clouds were scattered here and there about the sky, but fortunately they did not obscure the sun at any critical moment.

The photographic apparatus was in perfect working-order, and about fifty pictures of the eclipse were secured, with the assistance of Mr. J. L. Lovell. All of these developed well; and the exposures were so distributed with reference to the times of the two contacts, and to the occultation of solar spots, that they may be expected to give good results for the relative positions of the centres of the sun and moon.

The last contact was also observed optically by Professor Esty, Mr. B. Rush Rhees, Mr. Thomas C. Esty, and myself, the results all agreeing within seven seconds.

DAVID P. TODD.

Lawrence observatory, Amherst, Mass.,
March 16.

Hereditary abnormality of sense-organs.

Dr. Mason's note on 'Hereditary malformation' (*Science*, v. 1885, 189) reminds me of a case in which inherited abnormality of sensitiveness in sense-organs is of opposite signs.